Justice Department Touts Award Post 11/19/72

U.S. Gets a New Comic Hero

By Jack Nelson
Los Angeles Times

The Department of Justice has distributed hundreds of news releases reporting that Hall of Heroes Publications has presented its first "Outstanding American" award to Deputy Attorney General Richard G. Kleindienst.

What the releases failed to say was that Hall of Heroes is a one-man operation that publishes comic books.

Kleindienst, who is expected to succeed John N. Mitchell as Attorney General soon, accepted the award from Arthur S. Curtis, a Washington attorney who operated Hall of Heroes from a small, cluttered office in the National Press Building.

The presentation was made at a monthly meeting of the district of Columbia Chapter of Phi Beta Kappa national collegiate honorary society. Miss Corinne Rosebrook, chapter secretary, said Curtis arranged the chapter to make the presentation at its meeting "but the chapter had nothing to do with the award."

RICHARD G. KLEINDIENST
. . . got three comic books

Kleindienst, admittedly embarrassed by the incident, told a reporter, "This fellow Curtis, who I met for the first time at the Phi Beta Kappa meeting, called and said on behalf of Hall of Heroes he wanted to present me with a certificate as an outstanding American. Hell, he didn't say I was going to be the first one."

"The big mistake," Kleindienst said, "was the information office shooting out that news release." He said Curtis arranged that after checking with his (Kleindienst's) secretary and being referred to the information office.

The award declares that Kleindienst's "oustanding efforts and achievements, in the public interest, above and beyond the call of his

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United Press International

Deputy Attorney General Richard Kleindeinst smiles as Arthur S. Curtis bestows the "Outstanding American Award" on him. Kleindeinst stopped smiling when he discovered that Curtis publishes comic books and that he was the first winner.

Kleindeinst Cool Toward Award as Outstanding Citizen

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expected duties, have increased for all of us our security in and our enjoyment of our lives, our liberties, our property, and our happiness."

The Justice Department release points out that Kleindienst, who addressed the chapter meeting, was elected to Phi Beta Kappa at Harvard College in 1947.

The release noted that Hall of Heroes publishes books on Medal of Honor recipients. It does—95-cent comic pocketbooks which Curtis says he sells on military bases. In three years of operation, he has published three of the books. At the Phi Beta Kappa ceremonies, he presented copies of the three books to Kleindienst.

A preface to one of the books notes that some strips on Medal of Honor heroes appeared earlier in newspaper comic sections "with illustrious fictional heroes such as Prince Valiant, Joe Palooka, Dick Ttacy, Li'l Abner, and others."

Asked how Kleindienst was selected for the award, Curtis said, "We just came to a determination who was out there on the firing line. Every time somebody threw a hot ball, it hit him in the head. We considered a lot of people and we came up with Kleincienst and Gen. Jimmy Doolittle and two others whose names I can't give you yet because they haven't agreed to accept it."

He is so sure Doolittle will accept the award, he said, that he already has drawn up the citation.

Asked what he meant by "we came to a determination" when he was a one-man operation, Curtis said, "We can't disclose that. I can only say what I've already told you. We don't divulge how we arrived at it any more than the Nobel Prize people tell how they arrive at their selections."